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WHA/BSC FOR DRUCKER, FRIEDMAN, AND SHOWELL
NEA/IR FOR HWOOSTER
S/CT FOR VIRGINIA PALMER AND ARNOLD SIERRA
NSC FOR JUAN ZARATE
FBI FOR AD TOM FUENTES, CTD IRAN-HIZBALLAH UNIT AND OIO
AMERICAS UNIT
DOJ FOR DAG BRUCE SWARTZ

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KJUS](#) [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [ASEC](#) [AR](#) [FBI](#)
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: FBI'S AD FUENTES DISCUSSES COOPERATION
WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS

REF: A. BUENOS AIRES 713

[1](#)B. BUENOS AIRES 322

Classified By: AMBASSADOR E. ANTHONY WAYNE FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: During his March 5-6 visit to Argentina, FBI Assistant Director Tom Fuentes met with senior officials of the Argentine government, the Argentine Jewish community, the Province of Cordoba, and the city of Buenos Aires to discuss ongoing U.S.-Argentine security cooperation. Those leaders thanked Fuentes for the USG's support in ensuring a positive outcome on the Marrakech vote to issuing arrest warrants for suspects involved in the 1994 AMIA bombing. Justice Minister Anibal Fernandez updated Fuentes on the status of trafficking in persons legislation and plans to decriminalize drug use (in order to reduce pressures on Argentina's already overburdened prison system). Cordoba officials noted the progress they are making in reforming the province's judicial system, and Buenos Aires Mayor Mauricio Macri briefed Fuentes on his plans to develop a Metropolitan police force. Press coverage of the visit was generally favorable and contributed to a GOA and public perception that the USG-GOA relationship is back on track. End Summary.

The Visit

[1](#)2. (C) FBI Assistant Director Tom Fuentes met March 5-6 with senior officials of the Argentine government, including Deputy Secretary General of Intelligence Francisco Larcher; MFA Director for North American Affairs Vicente Espeche Gil and Ambassador Guillermo Gonzalez; Minister of Justice and Security Anibal Fernandez; City of Buenos Aires Mayor Mauricio Macri and Buenos Aires Minister of Security and Justice Guillermo Montenegro; Chief of Federal Police Nestor Vallecca; senior judicial and police officials from the Province of Cordoba; and visited with Jewish leaders at the site of the 1994 terrorist bombing of the Argentine Israeli Mutual Association (AMIA). Media coverage of the visit was generally favorable, signaling positive steps in rebuilding bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Foreign Ministry

13. (C) Much of Fuentes' discussions with GOA officials centered on the November 2007 Interpol General Assembly, s overwhelming support of Argentina, s case against Iranian officials charged in the 1994 AMIA bombing. DCM Kelly accompanied AD Fuentes to a meeting at the MFA with an ebullient Under Secretary for Bilateral Affairs Vicente Espeche Gil and with Ambassador Guillermo Gonzalez. (Note: Gonzalez led the Argentine delegation, both in the presentation of the AMIA case before Interpol, s Executive Committee in March 2007 and later at the General Assembly in Marrakech.) Both officials expressed their deepest gratitude for AD Fuentes, advice and discreet support throughout the process. Ambassador Gonzalez shared a confidential message from Iran, s Charge d, Affaires proffering a memo of understanding to resolve the case by establishing a multi-judicial (and bilateral) working group, but which fell short of offering any cooperation in bringing the accused to trial. Fuentes noted that FBI officials believed that one possible GOI course of action is to suggest the case be tried in a neutral country, similar to how the Pan Am 103 defendants were tried. MFA officials reacted favorably to the idea, as long as the venue was in a neutral location, such as The Hague.

14. (C) MFA officials expressed their concern over a letter recently transmitted to the GOA by Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, s office suggesting that the USG include the Iranian officials accused in the attack, in the State Department's "Rewards for Justice" program. Ambassador Gonzalez opined that this was a bad idea and guessed that his government, while thankful for USG assistance and support in

the AMIA case, would refuse the offer due to political sensitivities. In response, AD Fuentes suggested that Interpol could take the lead by publishing wanted bulletins, thereby minimizing USG participation. (Comment: Although Interpol does not have mechanisms for rewards, the organization, s network of 184 member countries provide widescale distribution of fugitive information.) Gonzalez welcomed that suggestion and reiterated Argentina's political commitment to prosecuting suspects in connection with the terrorist attack.

AMIA

15. (U) In his visit to the rebuilt site of the Argentine-Israeli Mutual Association (AMIA) building, AD Fuentes laid a wreath in memory of the victims of the terrorist attack that killed 85 persons. Leaders of AMIA and the co-located Delegation of Argentine-Israeli Associations (DAIA) welcomed the visit and thanked AD Fuentes for the USG, s unwavering support and technical assistance by the FBI in this case. AMIA and DAIA leaders voiced their concerns over what they characterized as a growing Iranian presence in Latin America and reiterated a call for Interpol member nations to detain the Iranian officials pursuant to red notices authorized by Interpol, s General Assembly in Marrakech. In a separate discussion with AMIA chief prosecutor Alberto Nisman during a reception that evening, AD Fuentes praised Nisman, s presentation at the March 2007 meeting of Interpol, s Executive Committee and November 2007 General Assembly which provided convincing evidence of Iranian responsibility. Nisman expressed his gratitude to AD Fuentes and the support of the Legatt officers since taking over the case.

Ministry of Justice and Federal Police

16. (C) In separate meetings with Minister of Justice Anibal Fernandez and Federal Police Chief Nestor Vallecca, AD

Fuentes described his efforts in Marrakech to win the support of moderate Muslim countries without directly appealing for their support in the AMIA vote. During a lunch hosted by Minister Fernandez that was also attended by the Ambassador and DCM, Fernandez expressed appreciation for Fuentes' efforts in the AMIA case, calling it key to a great victory for Argentina. Recalling his May 2007 visit to Washington and meeting at the FBI that discussed the status of anti-trafficking in persons (TIP) legislation in Argentina, Fernandez predicted that his draft bill would receive better support in Argentina's Congress than other drafts, which he characterized as "too convoluted and containing provisions that were not in-synch with Argentina's Constitution." Fernandez stated that once the legislation is passed, the GOA will be able to build upon it through implementing regulations and other steps to tackle trafficking in persons which are ready to roll (see ref A).

17. (C) The Minister took the opportunity to discuss his plans to deal with drug addicts, whom he said overburden Argentina's already exhausted legal system. Fernandez cited costs associated with prosecuting and holding in pre-trial detention individuals charged with possessing small amounts of narcotics for personal consumption. He believes that diversion programs that would include transfer of cases from the criminal circuit to administrative oversight which includes rehabilitation, probation, and community service, will better serve the justice system and allow the authorities to apply scarce resources to hard-core traffickers (ref B).

Province of Cordoba Judicial Officials

18. (U) During a working breakfast hosted by the DCM, Cordoba Province's Supreme Court President Armando Andruet, Attorney General Dario Vezzaro, newly installed Minister of Security Carlos Caserio, Chief of Police Alejo Paredes, and Director of Judicial Police Federal Storni discussed crime and judicial reforms. The Cordoban authorities reviewed their progress in instituting legal reforms in Argentina and noted that they are further along in implementing such reforms than other provinces and the federal government. Narcotics were clearly the main concern of the Cordoba officials, who clearly understood the nexus between drug trafficking, robbery, thefts, corruption and a whole host of social issues. The officials expressed their appreciation for the USG's assistance in training police officers and prosecutors over the years and welcomed our continued support.

Meeting with Buenos Aires Mayor Macri

19. (U) City of Buenos Aires Mayor Mauricio Macri and city Security Minister Guillermo Montenegro requested a meeting with AD Fuentes to discuss their plans to create a metropolitan police force, and to seek the advice of the FBI and the USG with regard to guidelines for selection and training. During the meeting -- also attended by the DCM -- Macri described his desire to have a police force independent of the federal police. He believes such a force, emulating similar models in large U.S. cities, would provide better community-based policing. Macri indicated that the city plans to place 1,000 police officers on the streets of Buenos Aires by the end of 2009. Fuentes noted that the FBI's LEGAT office is currently assisting the city's newly created Ministry of Security and Justice with a visit to police training and selection centers in South Florida. Macri thanked Fuentes for ongoing USG assistance in this area.

Meeting with Province of Buenos Aires Minister of Security

110. (C) Province of Buenos Aires Minister of Security Carlos

Stornelli traveled from La Plata by helicopter to specifically meet with the Ambassador and AD Fuentes to discuss security issues and concerns in the province. During the meeting, Stornelli characterized the province's security situation as "poor". Citing failures and bad policies by the previous governor and security minister, Stornelli assessed the police department (which is the largest in Argentina with approximately 50,000 officers) as "broken" and in need of extreme overhaul. Citing corruption as one of the greatest threats to the police force, Stornelli blamed politics and the lack of accountability and institutional professionalism as factors that have eroded values and public trust. Stornelli feels that he must first undo much of his predecessor's mistakes, to include reinstating a one-year basic academy and officer and enlisted rank structure as well as aggressively addressing corruption matters. The Minister took the opportunity to thank the Ambassador for all of the training support provided by the USG and pledged to closely work with the Embassy to ensure security of its personnel who live within the jurisdiction of Buenos Aires province.

Comment

¶11. (SBU) The Fuentes visit was an excellent opportunity for Argentine officials to catch up with someone they know and respect. The visit had significant and positive media coverage which showcased the mutual benefits of our close cooperation on some sensitive issues, a lesson that is always worth repeating here.
WAYNE